

The Global Anarchovillage

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Oft times have you heard from Your Friendly Neighborhood Anarcho-columnist (YFNA) of the necessity of Counter-Economics, and from YFNA and others of its perils and inherent risks. This time I'll lay on you a bit of its joy. This anecdote is true, though I've fiddled and omitted a bit for "security" reasons. And it begins in the Counter-Economy.

This is the City, Los Angeles, Calif. I work here. I'm an anarchist. (Fill in your own music.)

Sunday, 10 a.m. I was working on an "independent consultant" caper for my anarcho-buddy Leon. Deadline was rapidly approaching, and we both hoped a full Sunday would get us back on schedule. I had arrived early and was churning out marketable productivity.

Suddenly, I was under attack. Pain. Excruciating. Growing. I had to stop.

No, it wasn't the State this time (though, ultimately, I suppose, one *could* find it involved somewhere!). No, it was that old debbil toothache. O misspent youth! Visions of sugarplums danced wickedly in my head, and my tooth throbbed in rhythm to this savage beat.

Of course, good Anarcho-buddy Leon was concerned for my welfare. (There goes the deadline, he was thinking.) So we called around L.A. to find a dentist. On a Sunday.

Nothing. Zip-all. Nihil.

Faith in the Market wavering, we hearkened to a suggestion from one of the answering services of a guy who said he'd drive in from Glendale, but it would *cost* me... We were told that the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California maintained emergency dentists. UCLA is completely statist, so we went to USC (which was also much closer). Leon dropped me off, and I wandered through the corridors of the sick, maimed and hypochondriac.

Such sufferings—and was I sympatico. Half the bureaucrats never heard of dentists there, and the doctors (at least they were wearing white coats, etc.) kept pointing out new bureaucrats. Some efficient-seeming secretary brusquely told me the dentist was not there, that it was a myth, and to stop wasting my time. I did.

It had not rained (what I consider rain) in Los Angeles for months. Today it was drizzling steadily. I hopped a bus back to Leon's, phoning him during a transfer. He agreed to call UCLA.

UCLA confirmed that their dentist was equally mythological. Now we looked through the yellow pages, calling a few who boldly advertised that they were open late hours and weekends for emergencies. I guess their crystal ball told them there weren't going to be any this Sunday. They were out. See you Monday morning.

Leon, fretting at the time lost, had purchased a palliative. I dutifully, but skeptically, smeared benzocaine all over the aching area. He swore that it would work and that he had personally seen it work on someone who had worked for him recently.

It didn't work. Nor was anything else working. Including me.

"Isn't there anybody else?" I queried, resigning myself to a sleepless night, a forfeited deadline, and dread anticipation of a dental visit. (Yes, I have an irrational, whim-worshipping, utterly childish, but paranoid *fear* of dentists.)

He dialed one last time, an ad that looked a bit dubious to him, open 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. 7 days. It sounded very unprofessional. He was *not* recommended by the California Dental Society, which had recommended several golf-players earlier.

"Yeah," said the female gum-chewing voice, "the doctor will see you at his home, but he wants me to tell you in advance it's \$30."

Sure. Leon drove me to Hollywood, making comments on the relatively poor neighborhood, and what kind of dentist would be hard up enough to take a patient on a Sunday evening.

I helpfully suggested he might be a junkie and needed the bread.

We arrived at a false-front house, the door was buzzed open by remote control, and "Dr. Jack" let us in, to a house, yard, and connected garage in the back. We were to go straight to the back.

All over the walls were posters denouncing wicked qualities in food. Leaflets denounced Coca-Cola as poison and ice cream as sugared putrefaction. Leon, being a native Californian, was not put out much, but I groaned. A food faddist.

Doc Jack came in, sat me down, looked in my mouth, and whipped in the never-to-be-sufficiently-damned needle. The pain subsided. He gave me a card to fill out and talked briefly to Leon on the literature.

He said the tooth could be saved by something called root-canal therapy. I said I could care less, I got plenty of teeth, but you're the doctor. Just kill the pain for good. (I suppose I am giving away the depth of my mind-body dichotomy here. Ah, well, anything for a better story.) He had a pile of diplomas, I noticed, and Leon remarked that USC had a good reputation.

I mentioned, as I filled out the card, that the California Dental Society had been no help in finding him. He said he quit several years ago. Great.

He looked under "employer" where I had written "New Libertarian Enterprises." "What's new about it?" he asked.

This quack, about to butcher my one and only mouth, is questioning me? OK. I'll humour him. Maybe he still remembers enough of his training to get me through.

"What do you do?" he persisted.

"I work as an independent consultant. I'm gown here from Canada on a (CENSORED BY AUTHOR) job."

I added lamely, "It's for tax purposes."

He then said, "Have you ever heard of the Free Enterprise Institute?"

Oh no, I thought, don't tell me he's got it in for libertarians? He's actually heard of us!

"Uh, that's Andrew J. Galambos' organization, right?"

"Yeah," he said, "I took six years of courses before I split with him three years ago."

Holy anarchoshit! An anarcho-dentist! I was having my tooth fixed in the ever-lovin' Counter-Economy.

So Leon rapped with Jack about Galambos, while my anesthetized mouth was uncharacteristically silent. Doc Jack told us he hadn't paid taxes in four or five years. Considering he got \$140 more from me for less than half an hour of "root canal therapy," he's a good example to us all.

He gave us a brief attack on how soft-core the Dental Society was on preventative (as opposed to restorative) dentistry, and I gave him an NLW and he Xeroxed the LIBERTARIAN SUPPER CLUB BULLETIN I was carrying.

So that explained why he was working Sundays; he believed in the Market. Faith and health restored, I left to return to work.

But it did get me thinking. The next time some libertarian needs me in the marketplace, will I be available? (I put in a solid week of overtime, and we got everything out, by the way. Happy ending.)

And you?

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